

Dr. Burgess Weekly Address October 31, 2018

Correcting the Record

Hello, this is your Congressman Michael Burgess.

This year, our nation's health care system has been a trending topic in the news. As a physician and as the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, I have the privilege of leading a portion of Congress' efforts on this issue.

Over the last two years, House Republicans have been working to improve health care coverage for Americans. An important way to do that is through the private market.

Since President Trump took office, we have experienced encouraging economic growth. But what does this mean for health insurance?

When more Americans are working, more American families have access to employer-sponsored health insurance. In fact, since January 2017, the number of Americans in employer health coverage has increased by more than 2.5 million. Employer-sponsored health insurance coverage is far better than any Obamacare market plan, or any possible government-mandated insurance plan.

In this case, Americans with pre-existing conditions are covered under protections first enacted by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). That's not a misprint – since 1974, 40 years before Obamacare, employer-sponsored health insurance has protected Americans with pre-existing conditions.

Contrary to what you may hear in the media, today there are a greater percentage of Americans in employer health coverage than at any time since 2000 – an incredible benefit for the American people.

Here's something else you're not hearing on the news – Republicans in Congress are fighting to protect Americans with health conditions. At a time when misinformation is rampant, it's time to set the record straight.

Last spring, I helped to write the American Health Care Act, which passed the United States House of Representatives in May 2017. Without a doubt, this legislation guaranteed coverage for patients with pre-existing conditions.

Furthermore, some false claims about pre-existing conditions incorrectly suggest that all Americans could be impacted by proposed changes to the Affordable Care Act. This is in fact 100 percent wrong. Today, 93 percent of Americans are covered through an employer, or program like Medicare or Medicaid – all of whom are protected for pre-existing conditions. Of the remaining 7% of Americans in the individual market, the American Health Care Act **would not** have let insurers deny coverage for patients. Insurers could not cancel coverage.

Period. They could not exclude benefits. Ever. And, they could not raise premiums if the patient paid their premiums.

As you can see, House Republicans are committed to creating a fair system in which all patients are protected. Unfortunately, the Senate has failed to pass our legislation, or **any** legislation, offering a better option for Americans. However, the Senate can still choose to take up the American Health Care Act before the end of 2018, and I hope they will.

As Congress continues to work on advancing health care for the American people, I will keep you updated on our efforts to ensure that health care works for all Americans.

As always, I appreciate your comments and your questions on this issue or any other issue. May God bless you and your family, and as the song says, God bless you Texas.